THE AMERICAN DREAM 12
Just what is it? Do we still believe?

20 STRANGE BEDFELLOWS
Did viruses make life on Earth possible?

24 A CLASS ACT
Educator applies lessons learned at Saint Mary’s.
Eyes, Heart and Spirit
I have dreamed about stepping into Saint Peter’s Square since my first art history class. Today, my dream became a reality. I was immediately engulfed by Bernini’s architectural hug. As I gazed at the massive marble monument, I was transfixed by its strong lines yet delicate detail. This harmonious architectural balance created spiritual drama and drew my eyes, heart, and spirit to this physical manifestation of the power and majesty of Catholicism.
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF?
Your fall 2014 edition Roundtable topic, “Love Your Neighbor As Yourself?” brought some thoughts to me. What did Jesus have to say about the subject? He was asked by a scribe, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). Is He saying I have to love myself or anyone without loving God first?
But Jesus goes further. He throws me a fast-breaking curveball. He also says “But love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…” (Matthew 5:44). Does that mean that not only are the nice young couple and their two children who live next door and Al who lives down the street my neighbors, but also that ISIS guy in the Middle East, who beheaded two people recently? Oh, me! Now, does it get harder for me to love my neighbor as myself?

CORRECTIONS: In a photo caption of the Butch Whacks’ final show in San Francisco, we failed to identify original member Walter C. Quinn Jr. ’72, pictured at far right, fall 2014 issue, p. 36.
We neglected to include this picture (below) with a Glimpse from Lindsey Saravia Neville ’09, director of the dance company Jumpin’ at the Sun in San Ramon, in the fall ’14 issue.

Former IRS agent Janet Clark worked on her mystery novel with the help of Michael Caligaris, one of the M.F.A. students who taught the course Document Your Life Story at the Lafayette Community Center.

WILLIAM R. DELUCCHI ’50
Newark, Calif.

I can tell you, this partnership has rocked ours. Thank you for such a touching review of this workshop and insight into our partnership.

MAUREEN CALLANAN NEUMANN
Program coordinator, Lafayette Senior Services

GESTURES OF GRATITUDE
A concise history of past gestures of gratitude #gratitude: http://ow.ly/EWmCE

Has that “Far Side” feel to it … Well done.
November 26, 2014, at 10:21 am CRAIG LEONARD

Greatful
November 26, 2014, at 10:26 am MARGRET R. ASIMIRWE

TY so much 4 this!
November 26, 2014, at 5:55 pm BILL ROMAINE
FEATURES

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Saint Mary’s program teams up with nonprofit to help people find jobs.

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Viruses, as old as life itself, have driven evolution and inhabit our own DNA.

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Alum urges students to the finish line through his nonprofit, Envision Education.
SCIENCE GRANT FOR WOMEN

Physics Professor Jessica Kintner was doing paperwork on BART recently when a young woman asked if she was grading math papers. Kintner said, “Yes—physics actually.” “Cool!” the young woman said. The two then discussed Kintner’s position at Saint Mary’s and her Ph.D. The young woman continued to sound amazed at (presumably) speaking to a real live female science professor.

“It seems funny to me that this is still so surprising,” Kintner said. “It is the second such incident in a month.”

Perhaps the number of women science Ph.D.’s will increase one day, thanks to a new three-year, $300,000 grant for women in science at Saint Mary’s. The grant from the Clare Boothe Luce Program supports eight full scholarships for women in their junior and senior years majoring in science, technology, engineering and math.

“This prestigious award recognizes Saint Mary’s academic excellence, our commitment to fulfilling the scientific potential of talented women students in our School of Science and our Catholic mission of education for societal change,” said Provost Bethami Dobkin.

The new program was made possible by the Luce Foundation grant and $470,000 in financial aid from Saint Mary’s and additional federal resources.

A Prophetic Speech

Cornel West delivers an impassioned discourse on race in America.

In a stirring Southern Black Christian oratorical style, noted author and activist Cornel West gave the keynote address at Saint Mary’s Leadership and Social Justice Conference in October—“Prophetic Imagination: Confronting the New Jim Crow and Income Inequality in America.”

West delivered provocative religious, philosophical and political insights. He occasionally challenged the largely white audience of nearly 600 students, professors, and community members with keen observations about racial bias in America, white supremacy represented by the continued legacy of racial injustice in America, wealth disparities, the poverty rates of children of color, mass incarceration of young men, and the killing of young African American men by white police officers, as in the case of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.

West also took middle-class African Americans to task in his speech, in particular African American political leaders, from Congressional Black Caucus members to President Barack Obama, as complicit with the status quo, and more concerned with professional and electoral gains than in addressing the systemic problems confronting the African American community. They have failed to follow in the footsteps of such iconic black leaders as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Martin Luther King Jr., Ella Baker and Malcolm X, who were committed to bettering the lives of African Americans and poor people during the 19th and 20th centuries. They are featured in his latest book, *Black Prophetic Fire*.

The rousing address was followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session with students and conference attendees, and a book signing, where he wrote a personal note in each book, accompanied by hugs and selfies.

Pope of Surprise

The January Term Speakers Series featured Harvard Professor Father J. Bryan Hehir’s address, “Pope Francis, the Church and the World.” Hehir, whose focus is ethics, foreign policy and the role of religion in politics and society, described Pope Francis as “someone who encourages contrary voices in open debate and the respectful crossing of borders...a pope of surprise.” The Bishop John S. Cummins Institute also named Hehir as its seventh Montini Fellow.
Ian Cook ’08 knows his way around the kitchen. As food and beverage manager at Moraga Country Club, he oversaw thousands of meals every week—despite admitting he’s no top chef.

“I always joke around and say my middle name is ‘Can’t.’ Ian Can’t Cook. Thankfully, my wife took the last name, and she’s an excellent cook,” he said of former Gael classmate Aishlin Hicks ’09. They were married in Saint Mary’s Chapel in 2013 and had their reception at Moraga Country Club.

What Cook brings to the table is good management skills, likeability and compassion. He oversaw a food and beverage staff of up to 35 employees and coordinated dozens of banquets and weddings at the 4,500-member golf, tennis and swim club.

“I’m the eyes and the ears of the kitchen staff,” he said, adding that timing is critical when you’re serving large parties. “Say it’s a wedding and, on paper, they sit down at 7:30 for salads. Ninety-nine times out of 100, no one is sitting down at 7:30. And with such a delicate process like dressing the salad, you don’t want to start that too early.”

The job was not exactly what Cook had envisioned when he majored in sports recreation management at SMC. But after taking a job as a waiter upon graduation, he realized there was opportunity for advancement. “I didn’t want to move back home: I’d really fallen in love with the area around here, and I was going to do anything I could to stay.”

Over the last six years, Cook has routinely used the communication and leadership skills he learned at Saint Mary’s. Whether it’s serving one businessman or an entire golf banquet, his goal is to treat each person with kindness and respect. “It’s the overall good feeling you get when you’re helping others,” he said. “There’s no better feeling than that.” —Ginny Prior
ONLINE MBA PROGRAM RANKED SECOND IN STATE The School of Economics and Business Administration’s Hybrid Executive M.B.A. Program was named one of the 2015 Best Online M.B.A. Programs by U.S. News & World Report. “Our school has long been a leader in online M.B.A. education, even before the current craze of online offerings,” said Dean Zhan Li. Also, Business Insider listed the undergraduate business program as among the top 10 best return-on-investment programs nationwide.

RELATIONSHIPS Evette Castillo Clark has always loved working with people. Raised in Pittsburg, Calif., Clark grew up in a town where everyone knew each other, and all her relatives went to the same high school. “When you say you’re from Pittsburg, you know each other’s family,” said Clark, who is halfway through her second year as Saint Mary’s dean of students. “The first question is, ‘Who’s your family?’ and then ‘What street did you grow up on?’”

When it came time to apply to college, Clark was looking for something different, so she left for UC Irvine, where she got as involved as she could. “From a sorority, orientation leader, president of my residence hall, and intern at the cross-cultural center, I was so involved,” Clark said.

Her enthusiasm for community involvement and working with people makes Clark an ideal dean of students. She’s excited to be at SMC and also back in the Bay Area, where she earned her doctorate in international and multicultural education at the University of San Francisco. Her master’s degree in college student personnel administration is from New York University.

Making connections—with students, faculty, staff and the Christian Brothers—is particularly important to Clark. “I think relationships are everything.” —Paige Gilliard ’15

CENTER’S A GO The $23.5 million Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center opened this spring with much fanfare on March 12. The elegant red-roofed building, which fits seamlessly into the Saint Mary’s campus, houses an outdoor pool with a patio, lawn and whirlpool spa; a climbing wall; three indoor courts for basketball, soccer and volleyball; a fitness center; a café; and rooms for yoga, dance and spinning classes. Membership is free for all students. Designed as a dynamic gathering place, the spacious 60,000-square-foot center offers a way for the SMC community—especially students—to come together as never before. For more information, contact Mark Chiarucci in Development at (925) 631-4168 or mchiaruc@stmarys-ca.edu.
A Bright Future

Successful interim VP for advancement to take over full time.

In October, President James Donahue announced the appointment of Lisa M. Moore ’96 as the new vice president for advancement.

Moore assumed this role after having served for six months as the interim vice president. “She brings to the position great experience, a broad knowledge of fundraising in the higher education environment and deep relationships,” Donahue said.

During her tenure as interim VP, Moore’s team closed the 2013–14 fiscal year with more than $10 million in new gifts and pledges to the College—a 36 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. Under her leadership, the advancement team also raised $1.9 million for endowed scholarships, acquired a $613,477 grant from the National Science Foundation for needy School of Science students, a $500,000 grant from the Fletcher Jones Foundation to support students with financial need, and a $450,000 gift from an alumna to offer promising students access to and success in a quality education. Moore also led the creation of the Women’s Leadership Network, whose goals are to engage alumnae and raise funds for the Women’s Leadership Scholarship Fund.

The College’s new strategic plan for the future, led by Donahue, has set the direction for the work of Moore’s team—engaging alumni, parents and friends in the Saint Mary’s mission, its students, faculty and programs, and in securing more support for need- and merit-based scholarships.

SMOKE-FREE

When 11 student volunteers combed the campus for cigarette butts, they found more than 2,100 in an hour. The butts fill several jars at the Health and Wellness Center, motivating those working on the Smoke-Free Campus Initiative, a proposed policy to establish designated smoking areas before phasing in a smoking ban.

Out of 835 students who responded to a center survey last fall, 67 percent said they preferred a smoke-free campus, and 85 percent supported a stronger anti-smoking policy. The majority also agreed that secondhand smoke is a serious health risk. And 44 percent of tobacco users report using e-cigarettes and vape pens. Health center staff hope the results will spur people into action.

“No effort or policy would have a greater positive impact on the health of our students and community than a smoke-free or tobacco-free policy,” said center Director Alireza Rezapour, M.D. A committee of students, faculty and staff will explore next steps for the policy. —Brian Foley

A WITNESS FOR RIGHT

In March we observed the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery march for voting rights that proved to be a turning point in the American civil rights movement. Brother Michael Quinn, then Saint Mary’s president, was among the American clergy who joined the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and activists of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the second of three marches during that fateful month in 1965. After his return, Brother Michael told The Collegian that their aim was to demonstrate that the clergy of the nation supported the moral right to vote. “We went simply to give witness to what is right.”
Ocean Pulse

Chris Ray uses satellites to watch for tsunamis.

How would you describe the heartbeat of the ocean? For Chris Ray, the answer lies on the surface of the waves. Ray, a physics professor who also directs the engineering program, is part of a research team that depends on satellite data to measure the sea’s “pulse.” The data looks like that from a heart monitor. Ray develops mathematical formulas that decipher these incoming pulses to more accurately measure the ocean’s waves, currents and level—potentially opening a new way of studying tsunamis and climate change.

Ray keeps his finger on the pulse by using a mathematical model to decode the pulses the satellite receives. “The model tells us how the shape of the pulse would change if, for example, the waves get taller,” he said.

Working with a Barcelona firm, Ray’s team has proposed a new way to measure the sea’s heartbeat with five times the accuracy of what scientists rely on today.

Such measurements could save entire populations. Satellites that hover 700 kilometers above the ocean could relay sudden movements in the sea and hint at a brewing tsunami. Shortly after the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, scientists realized a satellite orbiting over the event detected the ripple as it raced across the open sea.

“When scientists analyzed the data collected by the satellite, they discovered that it would have been possible to detect the tsunami an hour before it reached the coast,” Ray said. “Tsunamis are inherently hard to detect. In time, satellite technology could make it easier to catch them.”

—Brian Foley

VISIONARY OF THE YEAR

Zhan Li, dean of the School of Economics and Business Administration, and the San Francisco Chronicle have nominated 12 people for the first ever Visionary of the Year Award, which honors a San Francisco Bay Area business leader for innovative thinking, creativity, and social entrepreneurship. The winner, to be announced this spring, will receive a $10,000 grant, and a $10,000 scholarship will go to an SMC graduate business student.

BEYOND HOT DOGS

On a typical game night, the concession stands inside McKeon Pavilion offer regular sporting event fare like hot dogs, nachos and sodas. But during the week, one of those spaces now serves a much different—and healthier—purpose.

Since last fall, student-athletes can now choose from bagels, energy bars, fruits and vegetables, thanks to a forward-thinking student-athlete welfare initiative known as the Gaels Grab and Go (or 3G).

For Gael student-athletes, the 3G serves as a one-stop snack shop between practices and classes. NCAA legislation now mandates unlimited meals and snacks for Division I athletes, and 3G allows Saint Mary’s to ensure those meals are healthy choices during the busiest times of day.

Access to extra snacks is an important component of student-athlete wellness given the daily demands of Division I competition. Multiple studies show that athletes burn far more calories than can be replaced by just three square meals a day. An average men’s basketball player burns about 800–1,200 calories in a normal practice. This program gives such athletes a chance to make up for what they burn juggling sports and studies.

“We aim to provide nutritious snacks while enriching the student-athlete’s mind,” said SMC’s head athletic trainer, Tony Kearns, who helped develop and implement the 3G program.

“We want them to understand that it’s not only important to eat healthy, but what they eat, when they eat it, and the amount they eat are equally critical to student-athlete performance.” —Ben Enos
A Political Education

Philip Goodwin’s fascination with politics began in second grade, when he started paying attention to the news after 9/11. Then, in fifth grade, he ran for student council and won.

“Politics has always come very naturally to me,” said Goodwin ’16. “It’s almost like a hobby. I just get it. It makes sense.”

Goodwin, a double major in English and politics, spent the fall semester in Washington, D.C. as the first Panetta Institute congressional intern from Saint Mary’s—thanks to the combined efforts of the Politics Department and the Career Center. Working for U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas (D-San Fernando Valley), Goodwin fielded calls from constituents, attended legislative briefings, and managed the congressman’s calendar—no small task when a typical day for Cárdenas lasts from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. and can involve 20 fundraising events plus time for voting, phone calls, and travel.

The rigorous internship program included not only Goodwin’s D.C. office responsibilities but also a two-week program in August at Monterey’s Panetta Institute for Public Policy—which included a three-hour session with former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, also SMC’s 2014 Commencement speaker. While in D.C., the interns worked more than 900 hours to receive academic credit. They had to attend weekly seminars, submit a 20-page journal, and write regular papers, weekly reports, and a final 20-page research paper on any policy they chose. Goodwin wrote about the recent Central American immigration crisis (75 percent of Cárdenas’ district is Latino).

“There is so much you can learn out of a textbook, but to be able to witness and be a part of politics firsthand is amazing,” said Goodwin.

While Goodwin went into the internship thinking it would confirm his goal of running for office, seeing the over-scheduled life of a congressman made him think twice. Now he is considering first becoming a teacher and then winning a seat as a school superintendent, where he can use his classroom work experience to create thoughtful policy.

After spending four months “as a small person in a big town,” Goodwin said he was happy to reunite with his friends and home kitchen. (He is an avid cook and Julia Child fan.) But he said his experience forever altered his perspective.

“It makes me more aware of what is going on around us. These are real issues affecting real people,” he said. “We are a small part of a much larger world.”

—Sarah Weld
As I began my last semester in Seminar, I expected to continue refining the skills this program has to offer: critical thinking, respectful listening and discussion. But with Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” I went beyond highlighting and putting tightly written questions in the margins to being inspired by the rousing words, struck with the possibilities in King’s ideas about activism through consumerism.

King estimated the collective wealth of African Americans in 1963 at some $30 billion a year and encouraged his fellow civil rights activists to harness that economic power and deny patronage to stores and corporations that did not practice fair treatment. The ardent nonviolence supporter suggested economic strategy as a means of nonviolent activism—“bank-ins” and “insurance-ins” to support the businesses whose ethical practices matched his and his followers’ beliefs.

As part of a generation labeled as avid shoppers, I asked myself what we can do to use our consumerism for good to influence similar nonviolent social change. The answer was easy and, on this campus, accessible every first Friday of the month—fair trade. The only Fair Trade–certified college in Northern California, Saint Mary’s welcomes each new month with a Fair Trade Friday, introducing students to the delicious and ethically produced products that come from fairly treated laborers and farmers. One Friday, in addition to coffee and chocolate, students were given a fair trade grocery list, created by Catholic Relief Services Ambassador Marlena Maciel ’15, which included a list of fair trade products found in local food stores, including Ben & Jerry’s. You can eat ice cream for a good cause!

“I made the list hoping that students would be able to start having brand recognition when shopping for groceries and choose to use fair trade products more than just one day a month, when they are free,” Maciel said.

Incorporating conscious consumerism into your life is easier than you think. The official Fair Trade USA website lists its partners and has easy tools for exploring fair trade options and fair trade–certified logos in grocery, apparel, and home goods stores. Global efforts for a living wage and the welfare of garment laborers, for example, use this website to educate consumers about purchasing choices and the ethical consequences of their decisions.

By buying fair trade and supporting businesses that promote human dignity, we follow in the footsteps of King, who hoped to awaken businesses to their prejudiced practices and show how vital the people they oppressed were to their success.

Concluding my final semester of Seminar, I reflected on what the program has given me. Reading skills? Yes. Confidence in speaking? Definitely. A lesson in economics and social justice? Surprisingly and with much appreciation—yes.
MICHELLE PERRY HIGGINS '94
Financial planner and principal, California Financial Advisors
The American Dream is far more than making six figures and living behind the white picket fence. Even though this paints a beautiful picture, the true definition is richer. We live in a country where the opportunities are endless and the restrictions are few. Thankfully, we have the ability to pursue our passion, create traditions within our families and live out a life based on our beliefs. I live my American Dream every day as a female business owner and mother of two, who publishes books with no verbiage restrictions and gives back to the College on the SMC Women’s Leadership Council.

RICHARD CLAEYS '63
Retired marketing and communications executive
I would equate the American Dream to opportunity. Both my maternal and paternal families came from Europe at the end of the 19th century in search of a better life in the U.S., and both prospered by finding work or building businesses of their own. And both felt they had opportunities here that they lacked in their struggling home countries. Both grandfathers were grateful for the chance to work, marry, borrow and invest without the political, religious and cultural constraints they had encountered elsewhere. We have tried to emphasize and reinforce the same values with our (now grown and fully employed) children and their families.

ERIK JOHNSON '05
Public policy manager working for local government
The American Dream is for many people in my generation just that—a dream. What binds us together as a country is the aspiration to move ahead of the generation that came before us. However, many in my generation are not achieving the American Dream, and we must resolve that if we want to pass the dream on to the next generation.

NORA GARCIA '08, M.F.A. '12
Teacher
The American Dream has changed since the Great Recession. Graduating at the height of the financial crisis has caused many millennials to have different dreams than the generation before us. Many young people today simply dream of being debt-free, and having a steady, well-paying job in their chosen field. The traditional American Dream of owning your own home, having a large family and taking regular vacations is a nice one, but for many in my generation, it is more of a dream than ever before.

BRANDON ELEFANTE '08
Honolulu city councilmember
It means following your passion without limitations. Being able to wake up in the morning with the freedom to choose what to do and being supported by that and family and friends. I am humbled and thankful to work in public service and have the opportunity to attend a great college. Having these opportunities really defines the American Dream.
There’s been a lot of talk lately about the American Dream. A December New York Times poll found that only 64 percent of respondents still believed it possible to work hard and get rich in this country, while a narrow 50 percent thought our economic system was fair and allowed such upward mobility. Is the rags-to-riches story the substance of the American Dream? Or is it something else? So we ask the question: Just what is the American Dream?

**GABRIELA FERNANDEZ ’15**  
Business major  
It is different to each person. This country is made up of an incredibly diverse group of generations who migrated here for a better way of living. The American Dream’s narrative has told people for generations that if they work hard, they will succeed and be happy. Though there are people who truly do achieve the American Dream, there are certain systems in our society that make it difficult for people to ultimately attain that idealistic world. Life just isn’t that black and white, and societal barriers like socioeconomic inequalities, race, religion, ableism and so on further help prove that sometimes no matter how hard you try, you won’t be able to change much. That’s why most people nowadays talk more about finding happiness in whatever form that may look like for them individually, rather than talking about or referring to the American Dream.

**TED PAPPAS ’86**  
Reporter and photographer  
It is the opportunity for individuals to pursue their goals in life—the freedom to have choices, use their creative energy, make mistakes, travel their unique path. When you see how restrictive some parts of the world are, it makes you appreciate all the more the open playing field that we enjoy in this country.

**ROSEMARY GRAHAM**  
Professor of English  
Opportunity? That’s the first word that comes to mind when I hear the phrase. But struggling behind that word in my mind is an insistent question mark: Is America the land of opportunity? Not yet. But it’s a good dream, that American Dream.

**ANNIE HOLLAND ’15**  
Sociology major  
I think of what the American Dream is historically—the white picket fence and house in the suburbs. However, as I have grown up, I feel that it is about having a successful job in America in order to be able to raise a family here. The American Dream has become more individualized to each person’s experiences and less about the picket fence/suburb image. Although, it is important to understand how people come from other countries, including our ancestors, for the American Dream. It is about freedom and opportunity that America allows for all individuals.

**MARTIN RADOSEVICH ’05**  
Executive director, California Democratic Congressional Delegation, Office of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren  
Given the fact that I grew up in a working-class household and was lucky enough to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees with minimal student loans, I feel like I am living the American Dream. I’m proud to have lived in a state that values college affordability. I was awarded a Cal Grant throughout my time at Saint Mary’s and Sacramento State, where I earned my master’s, and that helped me pay for an education that might otherwise have been out of reach. At its foundation, the American Dream is an opportunity to advance regardless of race, gender, religion, social class or sexual orientation. Sadly, we are seeing the cost of education increase while the need to obtain a college degree is more important than ever.
"Jacques" Ibula Katakanga ’14 is a medical researcher at Children’s Hospital Oakland.
Saint Mary’s BALOS program teams up with a nonprofit to help people find jobs.
“I knew I was good at leadership,” said “Jacques” Ibula Katakanga ’14, who works at Children’s Hospital Oakland as a medical researcher. But for 15 years, Katakanga, a Congolese native who first matriculated at Saint Mary’s in 1997, was unable to complete a college degree. Money issues, lack of direction and a budding career as a singer-songwriter kept him from his academic goal; at one point, he slept on a mattress salvaged from a dumpster and sold newspapers on the street to make ends meet. He dreamed of starting a nonprofit to benefit his war-torn homeland, but “I didn’t have the qualifications.”

Then, in 2012, Katakanga took the bold step of enrolling in SMC’s innovative B.A. in Leadership and Organizational Studies (BALOS) degree completion program for working adults. There, he found both the support and challenges necessary to reinforce his sense of his potential and “reveal the leader in me that I had struggled to embrace.” Today, Katakanga is pursuing his master’s degree in the Trans Global Executive M.B.A. Program at SMC and has also obtained nonprofit status for Congo Bolingo, the African self-help organization he once only dreamed of. “Nothing extraordinary is ever achieved alone,” he said of his highly successful experience in the BALOS program. “[The faculty] is an amazing group of people who are giving something that is more than an education.”

BALOS, a two-year program launched in 2009, helps working adults like Katakanga finish degrees that have sometimes been postponed for decades. Work experience counts toward the 64-unit prerequisite, and a hybrid format allows students to complete much of the coursework online, with actual class meetings scheduled just once a month, on Saturdays.

Despite such accommodations, “students may come in worried about whether they can do it or not—‘Do I still know how to study? Am I too old?’” said Leadership Professor Barbara McLaughlin, who well understands such concerns. “That’s how I got my education,” she said, “as a working adult. I was 46 years old when I got my B.A.”

But, says McLaughlin, a former AT&T director who went on to obtain an M.B.A. and then a doctoral degree (Ed.D. ’09), “You don’t get too old for this stuff. You can always learn, and you get smarter!”

With a program completion rate of 100 percent, BALOS offers students the benefit of a small, intensely interactive educational community. Groups of just 15 to 18 students—“cohorts,” as BALOS faculty call them—progress together through each of 12 required courses in a leadership program that stresses collaboration and inclusiveness.

“It’s a very diverse set of students,” McLaughlin noted. “Not just ethnically: We have people from for profits and from nonprofits, people who are unemployed, people with learning challenges, people who want to keep a promise they made to their mom 30 years ago. It’s quite a cross section.”

“Everybody in my cohort had years and years of experience to back up whatever their ideas, opinions or positions are,” said John Salvatierra ’14, an information systems and project manager who enrolled in BALOS after losing his longtime job during the economic downturn in 2011. “So it was a very strong cohort. But it wasn’t always everybody on the same page. There was a lot of discussion. And you learn from that.”

Students like Katakanga and Salvatierra often speak of their experiences in the BALOS program as “transformative.” Acquiring leadership skills expands options for work and study; being exposed to new ways of thinking broadens worldviews. And then there’s the shot of real-world drama that students leave the program with, thanks to an intensive culminating course, Leadership Project and Fieldwork, currently taught by McLaughlin.

Offered in collaboration with Catholic Charities of the East Bay, the course recasts BALOS cohorts as real-life consulting groups who address issues relevant to the nonprofit’s impoverished, largely immigrant clientele. In the past, the student groups have been asked, among other things, to identify gaps in the charity’s literacy programs, develop an alumni mentoring plan for clients enrolled in Project Access (a program for entry into early childhood education careers), and pinpoint the most crucial “soft skills” for job seekers, like networking and interviewing.

With their similar Lasallian commitments to social justice and service to the poor, Catholic Charities of the East Bay and SMC have a long history of partnership through Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA). “Leading people from poverty into being self-sufficient—that is part of our mission,” said Nain Lopez, a native of Mexico who heads Project Access and has assigned several related consulting projects to BALOS cohorts.
“There was a lot of discussion. And you learn from that.”

—John Salvatierra ’14
A typical Project Access success story is that of 37-year-old Karina Vroom of Pinole, who earned a B.A. in business administration in Bolivia and worked for the phone company there. But when she immigrated to the United States in 2004, inadequate English skills relegated her to the sales floor at the local Target. Then her daughter, now three, was born, and the ever-shifting schedule of a retail employee became untenable.

“I tried to look for a babysitter, but it was too expensive,” said Vroom. “I was living with my sister-in-law, and I didn’t want to live like that forever.” But now that Vroom is pursuing her early childhood education certificate at Contra Costa College and is working on her A.A., her prospects appear brighter. She subs as a classroom support provider for special needs students at Collins Elementary School in Pinole and eventually plans to pursue a master’s degree in special education.

Another successful Project Access client, Maria Ramirez Hernandez, came to the United States from Mexico in 1989. Now 35 and the mother of five children under the age of 15, Hernandez completed her certification in early childhood education at Contra Costa College last June. “It was great because I was able to get a better job after that,” said Hernandez, a former supervisor at Target. Today, Hernandez is employed by the YMCA East Bay in Richmond to work with toddlers and is pursuing her teaching credential with an eye toward getting “better jobs in the field.”

Despite such success stories, said Lopez of Catholic Charities, “times have changed. Nowadays, we have a lot of single moms or families with two supporting parents. [Our clients] go to school, they complete their units, they’re still making $9 an hour. That doesn’t sustain a family.” Nor, she said, did many of the organization’s male clients want careers in early childhood education.

And so Lopez asked the 17 students in Katakanga’s and Salvatierra’s Saint Mary’s cohort to identify new pathways to living-wage jobs for underserved residents of West Contra Costa County. Not as an academic exercise, but for real.

The realization that their recommendations to Catholic Charities could have an impact on the lives of struggling East Bay residents, McLaughlin said, struck the students “like a bolt of lightning,” and the energetic but sometimes argumentative group galvanized into a cohesive force. “It was a magical moment,” she said.

“Meeting some of the women in the [Project Access] program fueled my desire to do a really good job on the project,” said Angela Averiett, 39, a Hayward police officer who was promoted from sergeant to lieutenant shortly after receiving her BALOS degree last June. A mother at the age of 17, Averiett had to put her higher education on hold while working full time and parenting two daughters. “It was too much,” she said. “Even though I had a husband and he was [also] working, it was a lot to juggle. [So] I could really understand the plight the people we were helping were going through.”

Similarly, Salvatierra identified with the predicament of immigrants learning to navigate in a new culture. Born in the Philippines, Salvatierra came to California as a young man and remembered his initial feeling of being completely lost. “The first time I landed in L.A. and drove from LAX to Pomona, it was overwhelming,” he said. “You’re always the odd man out. You don’t know what the rules are.” But at least, he said, he had already learned English and had family members nearby. “I could only imagine how hard it would be for folks who need the English language training and who don’t know what the rules are,” he said.

Fueled by compassion, the cohort rose to the complicated challenge before it, conducting, in just a few short weeks, an extensive study and analysis of local demographics, economics, educational and training resources, and projected future workplace needs for major employers like PG&E and Chevron, among others. “That was no small feat,” said McLaughlin. And surprising everyone, perhaps even themselves, the students ultimately identified not one but two financially viable, upwardly mobile
careers that Catholic Charities of the East Bay's clients could prepare for—professional administration and labor/construction—by obtaining certification and/or long-term degrees.

Titling their proposal “Project Pathways,” the students outlined their plan in a well-documented 92-page report that they presented to the nonprofit’s board last June and followed up with a page of group reflections that ended by quoting Saint Francis of Assisi’s aphorism: “For it is in giving that we receive.”

“It was in depth; it was personal,” marveled Lopez, who considered the students’ work superior to what might have been produced by paid professionals. “Their research was more thorough; they went and talked to the [Catholic Charities] students; they went into the community,” she said. According to Lopez, the organization is now taking steps, including writing grants, to implement many of the proposal’s recommendations, which include not only specific ways to help job seekers build skills, but also strategies to forge connections with employers, unions and professional associations, as well as to effectively market the program to those most likely to benefit from it.

“I had tears in my eyes,” said Debra Gunn ’95, then the community engagement manager at Catholic Charities and now the organization’s development director, speaking of the cohort’s heartfelt presentation to the board. A late bloomer who completed her management degree only after years of fitful, one-class-per-semester progress while working and raising a family, Gunn said she “felt so proud” of the students, “like they were my own. It had come full circle. I had been in their shoes.”

McLaughlin saw the cohort’s well-deserved success as a promising beginning, not a final end. “You can always grow,” she said. “And that’s what I want them to come away with. OK, you got your bachelor’s. You’re graduating from this program—but you’re not graduating from life.”

Angela Averiett ’14 is a Hayward police officer.
Viruses make us sick, drive evolutionary change—and are part of us.
VIRUS IS A LATIN WORD FOR POISON.

Appropriate enough, when you consider the most recent Ebola outbreak, which by February 2015 had killed 9,000 people in West Africa (with fewer than 20 deaths elsewhere). Far worse have been the 1918–19 influenza pandemic, which killed an estimated 30–50 million people worldwide, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, in which an estimated 39 million people have perished, with Sub-Saharan Africa bearing most of the loss.

Aside from their role as virulent killers, viruses—stripped-down packets of genetic material in a protein wrapper—exist in millions of forms with wide-ranging effects, most of them escaping our notice. They’re everywhere, with a biomass thought to be equivalent to nearly 200 million blue whales.

And here’s the shocker: Viruses are part of us. As much as 8 percent of human DNA is ancient genetic code from viruses that probably infected and failed to destroy the germ cells (destined to be sperm or eggs) of our distant ancestors. Most of these little hitchhikers integrated into our genome before humans diverged from other primates and have been tagging along ever since.

Once referred to as junk DNA, these relics—known as endogenous (originating from within) retroviruses, retrotransposons (elements that copy and transfer DNA from one place to another in the genome), and other mobile elements—have been the focus of Biology Professor Keith Garrison’s research career.

“There are some endogenous retroviruses that we all have,” Garrison said. “A lot of them are very old. We share them with primates and mice. But some are more recent and some unique to the individual.”

In work he began at the University of California, San Francisco, Garrison and research colleagues looked for ways that these HERVs (human endogenous retroviruses) might help in the fight against HIV. The researchers began with the hypothesis that the immune system failed to respond to viral infections, specifically HIV, because of similarities between HERVs, which are part of us, and the invading virus.

“It turned out the opposite was true,” Garrison said. “And that’s what I always tell my students. Don’t try to prove hypotheses true. That’s not how science works. Often you make the most interesting discoveries when something completely opposite happens.”

Garrison and his colleagues observed that, in some people, the presence of HIV in a cell seemed to turn on inactive sequences of fossilized retroviruses, turning them into a flag or alert that HIV was present. The hope is that the study of HERVs could someday lead to a more reliable way to prevent infections by a deadly virus that mutates and adapts so quickly that it’s difficult to create a vaccine against it.

The study of fossilized virus fragments could be important in other ways—in the fight against cancer, for example. Garrison, one of a still relatively small number of researchers studying HERVs, is interested in better understanding the biology and history of these ancient, noninfectious scraps of genetic code. “We want to know what factors turn them on, what factors turn them off,” he said. “Could a cancerous state in a cell turn on the fossilized fragments and act as a signal for recognizing cancer cells?” By doing more basic, fundamental research, we can explore a lot of possibilities, he said. “So, we started to look at the history of these viruses and what diversity is present in the population.”

One of Garrison’s summer research students, Thomas Reynolds ’11, found a promising mutation in a segment of one of the endogenous retroviruses in the cell line. “It acted as part of an on/off switch,” Garrison said. “That’s interesting to think about. Could we learn more about what factors help to flip the switch?”

The study of viruses on a broader scale—their diversity and their behaviors—also provides clues to the origins and evolution of life on Earth. Besides making us sick, viruses have played an important evolutionary role in the natural world, functioning as major drivers of evolution in the genome “because they’re good at passing genes around horizontally,” Garrison said. Genetics is about vertical transmission, passing genes down from parent to child. Viruses are able to grab genes and move them around within a single generation, causing the relocated genes to be passed on to future generations. “It’s a different way to think about inheritance and evolution,” Garrison said.

HERVs are part of a much larger family of so-called junk DNA called mobile elements, sequences able to move around the genome, changing their number and location, and influencing neighboring genes for both good and bad. Mobile elements account for as much as 50 percent of the human genome and up to 90 percent in some plants.

“This is what I’ve looked at throughout my whole career, as a graduate student, as a postdoc and as a researcher here,” Garrison said, “thinking about this autonomous component of our DNA that’s made up of these elements that can move around. What do they do? How do we adapt to them? How do they adapt to us?”

An important example of the influence of viruses on human life is their suspected role in the evolution of mammals. The development of the mammalian placenta—which provides nutrients, oxygen and waste removal for a developing fetus—makes live birth and bigger brains possible. Some researchers think viruses are behind it all.

“One of the things viruses do very well
is fuse with the host cell in order to infect it,” Garrison said. Some researchers think that cells in the placenta adopted this fusion ability from a virus and used it to make a fused cell layer that regulates blood flow and supplies nutrients for the fetus, he said, adding that this explanation is still controversial, and that some placenta specialists don’t buy it.

More recently, Garrison has become interested in viral infections in coral. Under stress, they produce herpes viruses, which are well known for remaining latent and under control until something challenges their immune system.

“Coral is a stripped-down model of an organism that consists of only an outer skin and a gut,” Garrison explained. “But we understand so little about how their immune system functions that we don’t know how to help them.” He would like to find out how the coral immune system works. “Coral may alert us to problems in the ocean environment before other less fragile species are affected,” he said.

Garrison has also done a lot of work on viruses in plants—it was in the tobacco plant that viruses were first discovered in 1892—and this upcoming fall will take his sabbatical in Colmar, France, near Strasbourg, to study disease defense genes in wine grapes. Research on plant pathogens has implications for the wine industry and other crops upon which we depend.

Finally, an idea that’s difficult to prove and debated by researchers is the role of viruses in the development of life on the planet in the first place—quite a trick for something that isn’t, itself, alive. And the only fossil record it leaves is entangled in the DNA of a world of organisms. Nevertheless, a 2013 report from the American Academy of Microbiology notes that while we might wish that viruses had never existed, “without viruses, life on Earth would have been very different, or perhaps there would be no life at all.”

It is interesting, Garrison said, to think about how we can study viruses and other mobile elements as a key to unlock the past buried in the genome.
No MVPs here—it’s all about the team.

Robert Lenz ’86 knows that the lessons he learned during his four years playing rugby at Saint Mary’s have translated into life skills. In fact, for Lenz, cofounder of Envision Education, which runs three high-performing charter high schools in the Bay Area, it’s all about the team, not the individual.

“When I played rugby at Saint Mary’s, there were no MVPs,” he said. “You knew you were only as successful on the field as your teammates. It’s the same at Envision. We’ve built a culture of collaboration and teamwork for both the teachers and the students.”

Founded in 2002, Envision Education’s main goal is to close the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students by focusing on project-based learning—a classroom approach that helps kids develop knowledge and skills by working on real-world questions or problems over an extended period, from a few weeks to a whole semester. Because students are actively learning rather than simply memorizing information, the technique pays off, according to Lenz. More than 90 percent of Envision school graduates go to college compared to 40 percent of all California high school graduates; for African American students, the rate is 87 percent compared to a national average of 32 percent.

And it’s not just graduating from high school and going to college that contribute to a student’s long-term success: He or she needs to finish.

“Going to college doesn’t transform your life—actually graduating from college does,” said Lenz, who recently published a new book, Transforming Schools Through Using Project-Based Learning, Performance Assessment, and Common Core Standards. “In the United States, the overall rate of students who are either still in college or
who graduated five years after high school is 60 percent. In contrast, our first Envision cohort of graduates had a rate of 72 percent, and our second group had a rate of 85 percent.”

Lenz took a circuitous route to becoming an educator. He graduated as a government major and worked for a while after college as a glue salesman (“a tacky job,” he said) for a Berkeley firm. His first teaching gig was at Saints Peter and Paul Salesian School in San Francisco’s North Beach neighborhood. While he worked there, he got his teaching credential and a master’s in education through an evening program at San Francisco State University.

His time in college definitely shaped his educational style, Lenz said.

“One of the biggest influences in my career has been the emphasis on community and connectedness that I experienced during my undergraduate years—both with fellow students and with professors,” he said. “After Saints Peter and Paul, I worked at Sir Francis Drake High School in San Anselmo, and started a small learning community there with these values in mind.”

Lenz’s efforts bore fruit: In 1999, Sir Francis Drake was one of 13 schools named by the U.S. Department of Education as a New American High School showcase site; in 2000, it was featured in U.S. News and World Report’s high school issue. The honors brought national exposure.

“We were hosting visitors from all over the country, and what I kept hearing again and again was, ‘It’s great what you’re doing here, but it wouldn’t work for the kids in my community,’” Lenz said. “I got tired of hearing that, so I launched Envision.”

Envision’s three schools—in Oakland, Hayward and San Francisco—are intentionally small, with no more than about 450 students. Seventy percent of Envision students will be the first in their families to go to college, and since they don’t have family members to help them prepare for the SATs or think through where to apply, Lenz said, “ We're now working with schools across the country,” he said. “In fact, this past year, we finished working with six high schools in Detroit, and more than 700 seniors defended college-ready work.”

Along with his efforts for Envision, Lenz has continued to serve at Saint Mary’s as part of the school’s education’s advisory board and as a teacher in the school’s educational administration program. His modus operandi is very Lasallian, said Kathy Perez, SMC’s director of the master of arts in teaching.

“Bob’s passion is to help underserved students achieve success in high school and beyond—to teach them life skills for the real world, not just theoretical knowledge,” she said. “His approach resonates well with the Lasallian vision.”

Envision alumnus Kaleb Lawson agrees. Lawson met Lenz when he was 14, and was the first Envision student to attend college at Saint Mary’s, graduating in 2011.

“Bob encourages students to take ownership of what they’re doing, to invest in their own education,” Lawson said.

And Lenz certainly takes ownership of making Envision’s principles available to other educators. His book, released in January by Jossey-Bass/Wiley and co-written with colleagues Justin Wells and Sally Kingston, underlines the need for a “deeper learning” educational structure, one that helps students build on core knowledge as well as develop their critical thinking, collaboration and communication abilities.

In the end, it always comes back to that team framework—individuals working together, according to Lenz.

“Successful rugby players don’t run directly to the ball: They run where the ball is heading,” he said. “We’re helping kids anticipate and prepare for life events that may seem like setbacks, but become opportunities for learning.”
New York, New York

“Having an East Coast connection to Saint Mary’s means the world because we sometimes feel so far away. But then activities and events happen, and we feel close again,” said Kiersten Daniel ’01, one of nearly 30 alumni and parents who came together in Manhattan to celebrate the College and hear about this year’s vibrant campus happenings. Guests enjoyed food, libations and good company in a private room at the Penn Club on 44th Street.

“The growing presence of Saint Mary’s alumni in New York is encouraging on many levels. We can be a strong support to each other professionally and personally,” said Tim McAndrews ’96.

Newly appointed Vice President for Advancement Lisa Moore ’96 shared new developments in fundraising, including two major gifts to the School of Science, as well as Carnegie Hall’s inviting the SMC Choir to perform in April. Athletic Director Mark Orr shared the latest news from Athletics and previewed the big basketball game the following night against the Red Storm of St. John’s.

“Bringing the Gael spirit and Saint Mary’s pride to the East Coast reminds me about what it is to be Lasallian—the sense of community and the sense of spirit. No matter when you graduated, we all share that special, truly fun connection,” Daniel said.
A Sacramento County native, Anne Marie Schubert earned a B.A. in government from Saint Mary’s College in 1986. She was elected as the Sacramento County district attorney in June 2014.

Why did you want to study law?
I went to law school for all the wrong reasons. I just wanted a job that paid me a lot of money. I was very fortunate to intern during law school at the district attorney’s office in San Francisco, and it opened my eyes to this fantastic public safety system that we have.

What was it like going to law school at the University of San Francisco?
Law school was very hard. There’s a point in law school when you feel like you’re in a black hole and you’re not going to get out because it’s so much work at the beginning. But by the third year, when I got the system down, I really enjoyed it. I felt like I came out of my shell.

What inspired you to run for public office?
I’ve just loved being a district attorney. I think anyone will tell you as a career prosecutor, and I say this every day, that if I won the lottery today, I would show up tomorrow. Most of us in this building are not in this because we’re getting rich; we’re in this because we love what we do. How great is it to know every day that you are going to work to do the right thing?

What was the campaign experience like?
It’s very personally taxing, but there are parts I loved. I love to get out into the community, and I like to talk to people. I consider myself very social now. You become stronger, and you do things you never thought you would have to do. You ask complete strangers for money, and that’s not a comfortable thing. You become the cause, and I’m OK with being the cause because I know in my heart of hearts that I’m doing this for the right reasons. I’m not doing it for partisan politics or anything like that, I do it because I’m from this community, and I want Sacramento to be a safe place.

You’ve pioneered cold case (unsolved crimes) prosecution in Sacramento County.
My background for much of my career since the early 90s has been to try a lot of DNA cases. In 2002, I created a cold case homicide unit here. It’s incredibly satisfying, and a lot of it is just persistence. There are families out there that want answers, and that’s a really important thing. It’s very rewarding to the victims of crime to be able to do that.

What’s a big professional accomplishment?
One of the things I’m proudest of is the program that I started to help reduce truancy in the county.

I believe very strongly that public safety is comprised of many different components. People that commit crimes need to be held accountable and suffer the consequences, but I also believe that we are safer as a community if we prevent it in the first place. As DAs we have a role in that.

Why did you decide to go to Saint Mary’s?
My parents were always big on education. It was never a thought that you weren’t going to college. My first year I went to the University of San Diego, but I was very homesick, so I came home to Sacramento for a year and went to Sac State, and then I transferred to Saint Mary’s. It was really great because they had an outreach program here in Sacramento, and I went and met a couple of people who became my best friends from college.

What is your fondest memory of Saint Mary’s?
Probably the relationships and friendships I built with the people who went to school there. I also feel very fortunate because I feel like I had a great education. The education there was not just simply about learning whatever your subject matter was, but about a broader base of understanding. I think that worked very well for law school, since it wasn’t just memorization.

What do you do when you’re not at work?
I just bought a house in the country, so right now it’s about mowing the lawn and cleaning out the pond. I like outdoors stuff like that. My little 6-year-old son—all he wants is country and horses.

What kind of activities do you like to do with your two sons?
My boys are really into dirt biking and ATVs, so we do that. We also do a lot of hiking and kayaking. I have a cabin in the Sierras, and you can go way up into the hills where there’s nobody there. The kids love it, and it’s just beautiful.

How would you describe an SMC Gael?
I would probably describe them in terms of their character. To me, it’s pretty simple. It’s honesty, integrity, compassion, dedicated to the goodness of human beings. You leave there knowing that you’ve done everything you can to create that quality of character.
MAKING CONNECTIONS
More than 200 students and alumni shared food and conversation at the Dine With Alums event in November. The networking and mentoring evening marked the event’s 20th anniversary, with attendance growing each year. Seated at tables focused on their professional interests, students can learn from alumni once in their shoes—facing post-college life and finding their path.

MASTER POET
The Academy of American Poets awarded Robert Hass ’63 the Wallace Stevens Award for lifetime achievement, which annually recognizes a writer exemplifying outstanding and proven mastery in poetry, and carries a stipend of $100,000. The 73-year-old Hass is a former U.S. poet laureate, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, and author of numerous poetry collections and the recent What Light Can Do: Essays on Art, Imagination and the Natural World.

Hass, distinguished professor of poetry and poetics at UC Berkeley, frequently lectures at Saint Mary’s, and is an ardent supporter of the College’s MFA in Creative Writing Program. An activist and environmentalist, Hass also co-founded Saint Mary’s River of Words International Youth Creativity Awards contest—the largest environmental poetry and art competition for youth in the world—with writer Pamela Michael.

Stories in Three Dimensions
In her early 20s, Noreen Murphy Hughes ’78 thought “living the good life” meant traveling, being creative and wearing jeans to work. Now an architect, she’s found her path to success—but not without detours.

At Saint Mary’s, Hughes majored in something practical. “Accounting—because I wanted to make money and I had good analytical skills,” she said. “It was fun to study, but I didn’t want to make a career of it.”

At 27, Hughes began a graduate degree program in architecture at Virginia Tech. She worked for EHDD architecture in San Francisco, at the intersection of architecture and exhibits, for over 20 years.

One of her early projects as an architect was a remodel at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. It was a captivating environment, working with a mission-driven, visitor-serving client and she was hooked. At 35 she moved to Boston to work as an exhibit designer “where they were having all the fun designing experiences.” Throughout her career she worked with many great clients, from the LA Zoo to the Exploratorium. “I love that world,” she said. “Exhibit design is storytelling in three dimensions.”

Hughes now works for the Presidio Trust and recently managed the design of an exhibit at the Officers Club chronicling the 200-plus years of history of the former military base, using a timeline, artifacts and a visually stunning media display. It may be her most meaningful project so far.

Hughes has built a successful career by blending architecture, exhibit design and keen money management skills, crediting Saint Mary’s for nurturing diverse interests.

“You have four years to explore, meet people, be taught by these great professors and find your interests. Saint Mary’s changed the course of my life.”—Ginny Prior
Mobile Banking Expert

When Kim Vogel ’89 graduated from a Christian Brothers high school in Sacramento, there wasn’t much doubt where she would go to college.

“Once I walked on campus, I just knew,” said Vogel. “There’s a wonderful community feeling here, not to mention the values that come from the Christian Brothers. The purpose is much bigger than your major or where you come from.”

Vogel graduated with a degree in accounting and began working at KPMG, an audit, tax and advisory firm. After 12 years of climbing the corporate ladder and earning a Harvard M.B.A., she found herself back on campus, asking about a teaching position.

Vogel taught undergraduate and graduate students at SEBA for two years before returning to the corporate world, this time as founder and chief financial officer at the little-known mFoundry, a company that was—and remains—on the cutting edge of providing mobile banking platforms. MFoundry designed elegant online platforms, a forerunner to today’s apps, that allowed mobile banking and payments to thrive for companies like Citibank, Bank of America and Starbucks. Vogel served as CFO there for nearly a decade, before selling the company in 2013.

“Saint Mary’s was really the launching point for me,” she said. “I love the feel of this place—the community that’s here. It’s not just something that you talk about; it’s more than that. It’s a feeling, and I feel it every time I walk on campus.” —Joel Babr M.F.A. ’13

Kim Vogel ’89, founder of mFoundry, a mobile banking company, hopes to return to Saint Mary’s to teach in the School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA), after moving into real estate development.

UNLOCKING CAREERS

Exploring a new job or career just got a lot easier with Vault Career Intelligence—a dynamic online resource featuring exclusive information about companies, careers, internships and graduate schools—now available to students, faculty, staff and alumni through the library’s website.

“It’s the first time that we have been able to extend access to an electronic resource to alumni,” said librarian Gina Kessler Lee. “We think when it comes to career research, Vault is especially important to alums, whether they are looking for their first job after college, or switching or growing careers.”

Vault unlocks company reviews and rankings, e-books on breaking into dozens of industries and professions, tips on interviewing and writing resumes and cover letters, job and internship postings, and more.

“In this climate, a lot of students are still looking for jobs after they graduate, so we’re thrilled to give them access to this resource as a way to support their career growth,” Lee said. “It’s basically a real soup-to-nuts resource for the career exploration process all the way through the final interview, on a variety of careers that students may have not considered before.”

In addition to Vault, Project MUSE, which provides humanities and social science content from more than 120 university presses and scholarly societies, is also now available to alumni.

Students, faculty and staff already have access to these online tools through the library’s website. Alumni can visit stmarys-ca.edu/library/alumni.
Beloved Lasallian Educator

Herman Shum ’97, who graduated with a B.A. in history and went on to receive his education credential from Saint Mary’s, lost his life in a tragic biking accident on Dec. 27 in Contra Costa County. He was 40 years old.

Shum, a married father of two daughters, was born in San Francisco and went on to become a leader in Lasallian education, teaching history at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory, his alma mater, and serving most recently as vice principal of student affairs at Saint Mary’s College High School in Berkeley, where he also taught government. He had just been appointed principal of Justin-Siena High School in Napa, where he was to begin in fall 2015.

A passionate educator, family man and bicyclist, Shum served as class senator as an undergrad and also played men’s club volleyball at Saint Mary’s. On Jan. 10, a memorial service celebrating Shum’s extraordinary life was held at St. Cecilia Catholic Church in San Francisco.

Humor and Courage

He was the prince of puns. Brother Myron Collins was known for his deliciously dry wit, often expressed with a cheeky grin.

Born in Berkeley in 1931, Brother Myron entered the novitiate at the age of 18. He spent 50 years teaching chemistry at Saint Mary’s College and took great delight in the creative process of wine, beer and bread making—along with the occasional sulfur bomb.

“Rumor has it he did teach some of his students how to make sulfur bombs that were strategically placed in certain colleges nearby before upcoming basketball games,” recalled Father Tom McElligott, the principal celebrant at Brother Myron’s funeral on Dec. 13 at Mont La Salle.

Brother Myron’s wine-appreciation classes were a rite of passage for SMC seniors, and he was also an expert bridge player. Brother Richard Lemberg recalled a game in which he (Brother Richard) played a hand poorly. He asked, “How should I have played that hand?” Brother Myron’s answer: “Under an assumed name.”

Brother Myron also demonstrated great courage, particularly when he was in grave danger during the Israeli occupation of Bethlehem University in 2002. He was a visiting professor when soldiers staged a midnight raid on the campus. He refused to leave and stood with the Brothers.

Brother Myron retired to Mont La Salle in 2011, his impressive red beard long since turned gray, but his contagious humor remained constant. When asked how he liked retirement, he replied: “They don’t expect you to do anything here—and you have all day to do it.”

—Ginny Prior
IN MEMORIAM

A Passion for Performance

Ask alumni what they remember about Brother Casimir Reichlin, and they most often cite his opera-appreciation classes. Brother Casimir led trips to the Friday evening performances of the San Francisco Opera and Symphony.

This passion developed at a young age, thanks to parents who introduced him to the San Francisco Opera. As a teenager, he often spent his free time at the Opera House next door to his school, Commerce High.

After graduation, he enlisted in the Navy, serving as a medic in World War II. He turned down a naval career to become a Christian Brother and took his final vows at Saint Mary’s College in 1953.

During his early years as an educator, Brother Casimir taught at Saint Mary’s College High School in Berkeley, Sacred Heart High School in San Francisco and two Southern California schools. At Cathedral High in Los Angeles, he directed and produced two major musicals, winning 13 awards for Fiddler on the Roof in a citywide competition at Disney Studios.

But it was his library expertise—with master’s degrees in history, music, education and library science—that brought him back to Saint Mary’s College in 1977. He served as the director of the library for 10 years, until Brother Mel Anderson asked him to be his presidential assistant for special projects in 1988. He retired to Mont La Salle in 2011 and died Oct. 11, 2014, at age 89.

Brother Mel eulogized Brother Casimir as an inspiration for all who wish to elevate their lives with “the captivating spirit and mystery of the fine and performing arts. I am confident that Brother Casimir is now awestruck by heavenly music, exotic light and the Lord himself.”

—Ginny Prior
1937
Mike Kelly ’83 reported attending the 100th birthday party for Edward Nevin (Sacred Heart High School ’32). A giant of the San Francisco Catholic laity in the ’60s and ’70s, Ed is a retired captain of the San Francisco Police Department. He was a close confidant of fellow Gael Mayor Joseph Alioto and was a pioneer in San Francisco urban life during his time on the force. As Mike watched a 30-minute documentary on Nevin’s life (he is still sharp as a tack), it struck Mike that Ed is a great advertisement for a Christian Brothers liberal arts education.

1976
Besides working for AT&T, Miguel Gonzalez EMBA ’93 and his wife run Solo Opera, a chamber opera company located in central Contra Costa County. Their latest production was Hansel and Gretel on Dec. 19–20 at the Del Valle Theatre in Walnut Creek. Miguel and his wife have two children, Veronica, a senior at Saint Mary’s, and Tony, in his first year at UCLA.

1979
Saint Mary’s grads celebrated the Gael Rugby National Championship at Lake Almanor over the Fourth of July. Pictured left to right: Ryan Martens ’08, Alyssa (Gunter) Martens ’10, Nick Holmberg ’09, Terry Moylan, Joanne (Morford) Moylan ’82, Lynne (Noonan) Cowperthwaite ’82, Peter Cowperthwaite, Ellen Cowperthwaite ’12, Neil Cowperthwaite ’09, Oliva Talavan ’09, Rob Dutcher, Jacq Durward ’08 and Tierney (Reedy) Durward ’08.

1983
3 2015 marks 30 years in real estate for Glenn Mendell and 20 years as the owner of Fox Real Estate in Danville, Calif. In 2014, Glenn wrote his first book, Real Estate 1A: A New Agent Roadmap to Success.

1984
4 Todd Cecil is entering his 20th year as a veterinarian specializing in avian and exotic animals, from fish to primates (no dogs or cats). He recently received his credentials as a Certified Aquatic Veterinarian (Cert-AqV) from the World Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association, and is only one of 20 in the world. He lives in San Diego with his wife and two children, and a menagerie of animals. Todd is shown with two rescued tortoises, Tony Hawk and Vespa, both amputees fitted with wheeled prosthetics.

To see additional Glimpses photos, visit stmarys-ca.edu/glimpses.

1992
Erica Conway-Wahle is one of the founding members of the National Catholic Board for Full Inclusion, www.fullinclusionforcatholicschools.org, a nonprofit that assists and promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in Catholic schools. Her dream is to help fund children’s education so that finances are never a burden. She invites you to help spread the word by checking out their website and liking them on Facebook.

1995
Radio waves: Minutes before her show begins, Rose Aguilar, former guest show host of Your Call on KALW (91.7 FM), meets and greets her guest. “I feel like I should hug you,” she says, and does, “I read your book, and I was in tears.” The hugger is Bryan Stevenson, an attorney and author of a best-selling book, Just Mercy, about, among others, a man who was unjustly incarcerated and put on death row.

Mercy Hall is a trust, estates and probate attorney in San Francisco who specializes in planning for individuals with special needs. The State Bar in this area of law recently certified her as a specialist. She lives in Marin County with her son and spends her downtime hiking, volunteering and playing with food.
Virginia (Saenz) McCarthy MT ’85 has been working as a script supervisor on feature films for over 22 years. Some of her credits include: Blue Jasmine, Fruitvale Station, Little Children, In the Bedroom, Hemingway & Gellhorn, and La Mission. In July and August of 2014, she worked in Rhode Island on her second feature film directed by Woody Allen, starring Joaquin Phoenix and Emma Stone. She just finished work on the second season of the HBO TV series Looking. Since 1997, she has been teaching the January Term Sundance Film Festival Course at Saint Mary’s, taking students to the Sundance Film Festival each year. She is pictured here with Woody Allen on location for Blue Jasmine.
1996
7 Erica (Arntzen) Horton’s pseudonym is Val Arbor. She is a physician assistant who just released her first novel, Fireball. It’s about a pandemic caused by a prion, an infectious protein, smaller and more resistant to treatment than the Ebola virus. It is deliberately introduced into select populations via sperm banks and spreads like wildfire, transmitting as an STD. The dedication page includes appreciation for Professor Lawrence Cory, retired SMC biology professor. Cory taught a class called The Philosophy of Biology, which had a huge impact on Erica. Her book can be purchased through Amazon and Kindle.

9 Kyle James founded Rather-be-Shopping.com in 2001 and since 2004 has been managing the website that helps consumers save money with online and printable coupons, and earns revenue through affiliate relationships with over 800 national retailers. Kyle also wrote the Rather Be Shopping blog about personal finance, frugal living, the adventures of raising three kids and unique ways to save money. He has been featured on Good Morning America and Fox News, and in Kiplinger and The New York Times. James is pictured here on Fox News.

1998
9 David Bertaina, associate professor of history at the University of Illinois Springfield, was named University Scholar for 2014–15. The award, given to only one faculty member each year at UIS, is considered the highest faculty honor at the university and recognizes outstanding teaching and scholarship. As University Scholar, David will receive $15,000 a year for three years to support research and other scholarly activities.

1999
David Biles MS, EdD ‘07 graduated with a master’s degree in 1999 and earned his doctoral degree in 2007, all while teaching elementary physical education in Martinez, where he won two awards for Program of Excellence in Education in Contra Costa County and one for Collaboration of Effort. He was runner-up California Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year in 1994. David has been teaching in the Kalmanovitz School of Education at SMC since 2008 and was just hired to teach a kinesiology class, as well. He is also a college supervisor for student teachers. In addition, he teaches golf and Intro to Kinesiology at Los Medanos College, and tennis at Diablo Valley College. David wrote and published his first book, A Step Ahead, Movement Activities to Help Develop Children’s Ability to Learn. He is the only child of a family of seven children to earn a college degree—AA, BA, MA, EdD and has been married for 38 years to a lovely wife who is also a college instructor. They have three children and three grandchildren.

2001
Heather (Dill) Hettick and her husband, Christopher, welcomed their daughter, Theodora Elizabeth, on June 2. She joins her big brother, Stavros, age 6. (Maybe one day she will be on the SMC volleyball court like her mom!)

2004
10 Mary (Hudson) and her husband, Jason Luros, welcomed their daughter, Beatrice Anne (class of 2035), on July 22.

2006
11 Sara Luquín married Daniel Delgado on September 12, 2014, in San Francisco.

2007
12 Jackie Nelson EE reports “I am a graduate of 2007—yes, the one where Arnold [Swarzenegger] handed out our diplomas!” She recently published a book, The Adventures of Han Kitty, which is available on Amazon, Kindle, and Barnes and Noble, with a soft cover copy for sale at Xlibris.com.

2008
13 Brandon Elefante earned a BS in economics and business administration, then completed an MBA at Chaminade University of Honolulu with an emphasis on the public sector. He lives in Pearl City on the island of Oahu. In his first political run for public office, Brandon received 64.4 percent of the total votes cast to win a seat on the Honolulu City Council, representing District 8 (Aiea, Pearl City and Waipahu) in the primary election on Aug. 9, 2014. Brandon will be one of nine members on the council, which is responsible for establishing policy for the city and county of Honolulu in the district where he grew up. He is the youngest member at 28 years old. Prior to his run, he worked for four years as a legislative aide to former Councilmember Breene Harimoto, who is now a state senator. Before that, he served as a high school teacher and golf coach at Damien Memorial School in Honolulu. On Nov. 12, 2014, Brandon was sworn in to take office.

2011
15 Bradley Alban is a first-year student in East Tennessee State’s Sport Physiology and Performance PhD program. He also is an assistant cross-country and track coach for Milligan College. After graduating from Saint Mary’s, Bradley spent three years as the head cross-country and track coach for Miramonte High School in Orinda, Calif., while also pursuing his master’s degree in kinesiology from Cal State–East Bay.

2012
Nick Monaco majored in communications and minored in Italian studies. Since graduating, he has toured the world performing as a DJ and live performer. He recently put out an album called Mating Call. (Preview it here: https://soundcloud.com/nickmonaco.) Part of his work as a touring artist is LGBT activism, specifically focused on club culture, the focus of his senior capstone project. Read more about his work on transgender issues at nickmonaco.com/freak-flag.
2005

Larissa Ann Mieko (Villar) and Rayn Lael Aaberg, from Anchorage, Ala., were married Oct. 26, 2013, in Koloa, Kauai, at St. Raphael’s Catholic Church—the oldest Catholic church in the Hawaiian Islands and where Larissa’s great-grandparents, who immigrated to Kauai from the Philippines, were married. Officiate was Father Tom Lilly from St. Elizabeth Anne Seton Church Parish in Anchorage. Loving friends and family, traveling from near and far to be there for the special day, surrounded Larissa and Rayn. The reception was held at Plantation Gardens Restaurant, and the honeymoon included adventuring around Kauai and a stay in a tree house. The couple looks forward to a life filled with love, adventures and laughter. Larissa and Rayn are shown at St. Raphael’s Catholic Church.
My Shiny Teeth and Me

During my first year of service, whenever anyone discovered I was from California, I would be asked the inevitable question: “How did you end up here? In Saint Louis?” I would usually mumble something like, “Because I got a job,” and let that be all. However, upon starting my second year, that answer no longer seemed wholly appropriate. The question had now shifted from, “Why did you come here,” to, “Why did you come back?”

This is a song for the lonely; can you hear me tonight?
—Cher

On the first day of school, I realized why I came back to Saint Louis. I came back for the joy I felt working with the students. I was Saint Cecilia’s first volunteer to ever do a second year. So I don’t think my students fully believed me when I told them I would be returning. The smiles on their faces when they saw me back on the first day were priceless. On the third day of school, a second-grader thanked me for teaching her something—“and for having shiny teeth.” I smiled big with those very shiny teeth and said, “You are welcome.”

What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.
—Kelly Clarkson

Beginning last year, I felt as though I had been torn from my home; I was rootless and floundering. It took me at least six months to feel like I knew what I was doing on a daily basis. Starting my second year, I realized without even knowing it, I had in fact rooted myself in the culture of Saint Cecilia’s School and found a support network within the staff. Beginning this year, I began with a semblance of knowing that a year ago would have seemed crazy. The students were as excited to work with me another year as I was excited to work with them. I was able to hit the ground running.

I knew their names, I knew their interests, and I knew the classroom dynamics. I knew which students liked to talk about One Direction, about Lego dinosaurs, and how to strategize surviving an impending zombie apocalypse. In many ways, the second year actually has been easier. Sure, I have increased responsibilities, but now that I know what I’m good at, I can be a more effective educator. No more long division for Mr. Farley and much more writing help.

But just because it burns, doesn’t mean you’re gonna die. You’ve gotta get up and try, try, try.
—Pink

I learned after a year of teaching that perspective is everything. You can have a terrible day when no one learned anything, or you can have a learning day for yourself, discovering techniques not to use. Every day could be the worst day of my life if I let it. But when I learned what battles to fight and what arguments to let settle, I became a much happier and effective educator.

And in the end:
Just dance—it’ll be OK.
—Lady Gaga

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Freshman Paul Kim wore wings for the Virgin of Guadalupe ceremony on campus. The annual celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 is one of the most important dates in the Mexican calendar.